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WOMEN'S CRISIS CENTER SPEAKS OUT ON SEXUAL ASSAULT AND STANFORD CASE When Everything is on the Line, Everything Counts

Hebron, KY, June 15, 2016 - For the past two weeks, the country has been captivated by the strong, clear voice of the victim of sexual assault by Brock Turner, the former Stanford University swimmer. She painted a deeply troubling and accurate depiction of the trauma and pain inflicted on her and her family by that sexual violence. We believe the honesty and vulnerability of her shared experience has struck a deep cord in each of us. Her testimony opened our eyes to the fact that the anguish of the victim's experience, especially contrasted to the sentence given to the sexual assailant, deserves our righteous anger and outrage.

We wish we could say that every time a survivor bravely speaks her or his truth that we stop, listen, and recognize the injustice and damage done. Most often we turn our heads and try to forget. We do not face the reality that sexual assault happens at a horrifying rate. Most importantly we do not pay attention to the impact on the whole person's well-being. The unidentified victim gave expression to what is selfishly stripped away from victims: their voice, their power, their choice, and their safety. The furious and graphic letter of the victim written to her assailant shows us what we cannot deny as a society. As Vice President Joe Biden said, we all need to read the letter.

Despite the suffering and injustice occurring around us, there are many individuals and organizations who are dedicated to providing compassionate, empathetic responses to sexual assault victims. In Northern Kentucky, the Women's Crisis Center has been providing aid to sexual assault survivors for forty years. This is exemplified in our 24-hour a day medical advocacy program. Women's Crisis Center, through staff and volunteers, is available to every sexual assault survivor treated at a St. Elizabeth Health System emergency room. Their presence provides a confidential, trained advocate who offers support to the victim. This service would not be possible without the dedication of St. Elizabeth to providing a team of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) who have advanced education to complete sexual assault evidence exams with care and compassion. In 2012 the Woman's Crisis Center, St. Elizabeth, The Kenton County Attorney's office and local law enforcement were nationally recognized for their highly collaborative efforts for sexual assault and domestic victims. It has become a model for other communities.

The Stanford victim's statement also pays recognition and honor to two key individuals: the bicycling bystanders who noticed something was wrong and stopped the assault in progress. We are all bystanders to violence. Most of us don't feel like we have the courage to say anything. We do not know how to respond. Women's Crisis Center has partnered with Green Dot to create a culture change where we are all active bystanders who work to stop violence. Green Dot is a national training program built on the premise that we can measurably and systematically reduce violence within any given community. We are currently working with local high schools, colleges and community agencies to provide this educational opportunity across the Greater Cincinnati Area.

These are only a couple of examples of a wide range of support provided by Women's Crisis Center to all survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. There is much to be done to create a culture that does not tolerate sexual violence in any form and a judicial system that deals appropriately with sexual assault cases. It is on all of us. If you would like to join the effort we welcome you. We are always in need of volunteers and donations. To the Stanford victim: We are so sorry that it took something so incredibly painful for so many to take a stand against sexual violence. Your vulnerability, bravery, and strong voice are speaking for so many whose voices have yet to be heard.

When everything is on the line, everything counts.

Women's Crisis Center (WCC) is a 501(c)(3), nonprofit social service agency committed to leading our community in the social change needed to end domestic violence, rape, and sexual abuse. Services are provided confidentially and at no cost to our clients. To learn more visit www.wccky.org.

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